

Message Text

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: UNGA, KS

SUBJECT: COMMAND ARRANGEMENTS

REF: (A) SEOUL 5357 (B) SEOUL 5501

1. FONMIN KIM TONG-CHO CALLED IN AMBASSADOR JULY 21 TO HAND OVER MEMORANDUM CONCERNING ROKG POSITION ON POST-UNC COMMAND ARRANGEMENTS. (TEXT OF MEMORANDUM CONTAINED REF B).

2. MEMORANDUM MAKES FOLLOWING THREE SUBSTANTIVE POINTS:

(A) THAT CINC OF COMBINED COMMAND SHOULD BE US GENERAL AS LONG AS "PRESENT LEVEL" OF US MILITARY PRESENCE IN KOREA IS MAINTAINED.

(B) THAT COMBINED COMMAND SHOULD HAVE OPCON OVER BOTH ROK AND US UNITS.

(C) THAT A ROK/US "MILITARY COMMITTEE" SHOULD BE ESTABLISHED AS AN ORGAN SUPERIOR TO COMBINED COMMAND.

3. FONMIN EXPLAINED THAT, FROM ROKG VIEWPOINT, IT
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IMPORTANT MAINTAIN APPEARANCES OF EQUALITY BETWEEN

US AND ROK. THIS FACTOR ENTERS INTO ROKG POSITION ON ALL THREE POINTS. SECOND CONSIDERATION HAS BEEN EFFORT TO ACHIEVE STRUCTURE AS CLOSELY PARALLEL AS POSSIBLE TO NATO.

4. DURING ENSUING DISCUSSION AMBASSADOR NOTED THAT LEVEL OF US TROOP PRESENCE FLUCTUATES EVEN UNDER CURRENT CIRCUMSTANCES AND THEREFORE "PRESENT LEVEL" COULD NOT BE USED AS CONDITION FOR HAVING US OFFICER AS CINC OF COMBINED COMMAND. KIM REPLIED THAT, IN FACT, REQUIRED TROOP LEVEL COULD BE WORKED OUT BY MUTUAL AGREEMENT, AND ROKG WAS NOT RIGID ON EXACT LANGUAGE.

5. WITH REGARD TO OPERATIONAL CONTROL, AMBASSADOR OBSERVED THAT CONSTITUTIONAL CONSIDERATIONS REQUIRED THAT US TROOPS BE UNDER US COMMANDER. KIM REPLIED THAT ROKG RECOGNIZED NEED TAKE ACCOUNT OF US CONSTITUTIONAL REQUIREMENTS, BUT IT DIFFICULT FOR ROKG ACCEPT A COMBINED COMMAND WITH US COMMANDER HAVING OPCON OVER ONLY KOREAN FORCES.

6. CONCERNING ROK/US MILITARY COMMITTEE, KIM SAID THAT ROKG WOULD ENVISION THIS AS BODY SETTING BROAD POLICY AND STRATEGY SIMILAR TO NATO MILITARY COMMITTEE.

7. AMBASSADOR SAID THAT HE WOULD SUBMIT MEMORANDUM TO WASHINGTON. HE BELIEVED AGREEMENT COULD BE REACHED ON SUBSTANCE OF POINTS AT ISSUE. UNC AND MND REPRESENTATIVES COULD THEN BEGIN TO WORK ON DETAILS.

8. COMMENT: GENERALLY TENTATIVE WORDING OF MEMORANDUM AND KIM'S COMMENTS INDICATE THAT ROKG POSITION HAS CONSIDERABLE FLEXIBILITY. BELIEVE DIFFERENCES ON CRITERIA FOR RETAINING US COMMANDER AND ON MILITARY COMMITTEE ARE LARGELY MATTER OF FORM RATHER THAN SUBSTANCE. CRITICAL ISSUE IS COMBINED COMMANDER'S OPCON OVER US FORCES. BELIEVE ROKG WOULD
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ACCEPT NATO FORMULA PLACING AIR DEFENSE UNDER COMBINED COMMANDER'S OPCON, WHICH IS IN FACT CURRENT PRACTICE HERE. FORMULA WOULD REQUIRE ROKG RECOGNITION OF NEED TO CONFORM TO US CONSTITUTIONAL REQUIREMENTS. IN GENERAL, WOULD SUGGEST SOME MOVEMENT IN US POSITION ON POINTS AT ISSUE TO SATISFY, AT LEAST FOR FORM'S SAKE, EVIDENTLY KEY ROKG DESIRE TO GIVE IMPRESSION OF MORE

EQUAL PARTICIPATION IN COMMAND SET-UP. SNEIDER

NOTE BY OC/T: NOT PASSED CINCPAC.

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